United Nations S/2010/321

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 June 2010

Original: English

Identical letters dated 18 June 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to draw your attention to a developing matter in the Middle East that could affect the peace and security of the region.

It appears that a small number of ships plan to depart from Lebanon and sail to the Gaza Strip which is under the control of the Hamas terrorist regime. While those who organize this action claim that they wish to break the blockade of Gaza and to bring humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza, the true nature of their actions remains dubious. In glaring contrast to these self-proclaimed intentions, the organizers of these boats have made repeated assertions to the media that they wish to be "shahids" (martyrs). Furthermore, there exists a possible link between the organizers of the ships in question and the terrorist group Hizbullah. On 4 June 2010, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah, gave an interview in which he called upon Lebanese citizens to participate in such flotillas and to use such activities to break the Israeli blockade. As a result, Israel cannot exclude the possibility that terrorists or arms will be smuggled on-board the ships in question.

Given the ongoing armed conflict between the Hamas terrorist organization which controls the Gaza Strip and the State of Israel, and in view of the declared intention of the aforementioned vessels to breach the naval blockade, compounded by the fact that these ships originate from Lebanon which remains in a state of hostility with Israel, Israel reserves its right under international law to use all necessary means to prevent these ships from violating the existing naval blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip.

Despite this blockade and the fact that Staff Sergeant Gilad Shalit remains in captivity without access to the Red Cross or any other international organization, humanitarian assistance continues to be delivered to the Gaza Strip on a daily basis. In this respect, Israel remains in an ongoing dialogue with the international community regarding the quantity and types of goods permitted into Gaza. Furthermore, there exist appropriate mechanisms to transfer humanitarian assistance to Gaza. If those who organize these provocative flotillas truly cared to provide assistance to the Gaza Strip, they would do so through these known mechanisms.

In view of these circumstances, Israel calls upon the Government of Lebanon to demonstrate responsibility and to prevent these boats from departing to the Gaza Strip. Such action will prevent any possible escalation and tensions in our region. Israel further calls upon the international community to exercise its influence in

Please recycle

order to prevent these boats from departing and to discourage their nationals from taking part in such action.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gabriela **Shalev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative